

MEDIA, PA -- On Saturday, September 8th, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07), Delaware County Council Chairman Andy Reilly, State Representatives Bryan Lentz and Ron Raymond, and Delaware County Council member Jack Whalen met in Sestak's District Office to coordinate their actions to combat the FAA's Airspace Redesign decision. — "It is essential that we continue to work together at local, regional, state, and federal levels," said Congressman Sestak. "Today's meeting was extremely productive, and represents an important step towards stopping the implementation of the FAA's flawed plan."

Council Chairman Reilly agreed, and said, "The FAA's attack on Delaware County needs to be confronted in a bi-partisan fashion using every resource available. County Council is committed to fighting the plan with all of our elected officials and the thousands of residents who have communicated their support for our fight."

First, Congressman Sestak briefed on the status of the General Accountability Office (GAO) study, which he requested along with Congressman Rob Andrews (D-NJ) and Jerry Costello, the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Aviation. This study was sought specifically because of concerns that the FAA had failed to adequately address noise mitigation and other environmental impacts in its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

"The FAA's methodology and the models used in this project are misguided and flawed," said Congressman Sestak. "Over the next eight months, the GAO will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the NY/NJ/PHL Airspace Redesign, investigating the validity and reliability of the implementation cost and schedule estimates and the potential environmental impacts on local communities. The resulting report will provide Congress with an objective government study detailing whether a true cost-benefit analysis was done."

Council Chairman Reilly gave an update on County Council's pending legal responses to the FAA's Record of Decision on the NY/NJ/PHL Airspace Redesign. County Council will seek a stay to prevent the FAA from proceeding with implementation while a lawsuit is in process. Delaware County's lawsuit is one of at least a dozen lawsuits challenging the FAA decision expected from other local governments in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey.

Representatives Lentz and Raymond lent their legal and legislative experience to the discussion. Their PA HB 1182, which establishes the Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Airport Authority to operate the Philadelphia International Airport and Lehigh Valley International Airport, supports Congressman Sestak's and County Council's position that there are more efficient, cost-effective ways to improve the performance of the Philadelphia International airport without causing harm to the citizens of Delaware County.

As a result of the discussions, the participants delineated the respective topics of the GAO study and the planned Delaware County lawsuit. This is particularly important because the GAO has historically avoided studying issues that are actively being heard in the courts. Distinguishing the County's suit from the GAO report will enable both to proceed. The GAO will focus primarily on broad issues, such as the real causes and potential solutions of

airport/airspace congestion, the FAA's use of questionable measurements and study techniques in determining costs, and the impact of environmental consequences on the health, education and well-being of our children and community. In contrast, the County's litigation will focus on specific failures of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the Record of Decision (ROD) to comply with elements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental regulations, including the FAA's own NEPA-implementing order.

"Delaware County's elected officials are wholly committed to a bi-partisan effort to fight the FAA and stop this wasteful, harmful plan," said Congressman Sestak, "Today's successful meeting will enable us to coordinate efforts from different fronts to challenge the FAA airspace redesign, which include both the pursuit of litigation and the GAO investigation, so that one does not adversely affect the other and both will be pursued in the most effective way possible."

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.